

Dr Krakauer,

after reading your article about Christopher McCandless's story, I have kept on thinking how his life has affected my inner person, my thoughts and view of life. I felt the need to share my feelings and to contribute with a letter.

I believe that the colorful variety of people around us often look for direction in life that appeal to them; for personal joy is found in very different fields, depending on our personal inclinations and likes. Someone might find joy on a high level education, a personal carrier, into a yoga session or to move to an other country. All of this suggests that one should go for the "gusto" and look for the enlivening joy that matches our different personalities.

Christopher's bliss was mother nature and I admire his extremism, his aesthetic voyager whose home was the road and, at the end, his wild destination. I'm attracted by his spiritual revolution and the strong desire to escape from this world of abstraction, false security, material excess and irksome obligations.

Like him I strongly believe that in life it's not necessarily important to be strong but to feel strong and his story has fed my desire to find myself at least once in the most ancient of human conditions, where we can find lessons from mother nature and where we are no longer poisoned by civilization and all its traps of technology. The core of man's spirit comes from new experiences!

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Mr John Krakauer,

I've never written a letter to a magazine before, but this story is different. I would like to congratulate you, the way you reported the story and life of Chris McCandless left me speechless. I've been going on reading with my eyes widely opened, imagining at the same time what Chris saw in front of him, the landscapes, and wondering about his feelings in front of nature, seeing perfection.

Alex Supertramp made me cry with his innocence and his pure soul. The title you gave to the article is just the right one. He was a real innocent and lived his life as an innocent only being himself, with not effort. He lived in peace with the nature, with the animals and with people too, because he brought something good and generous for everyone he met in his journey and they all ended up loving him, purely, for his innocence because he taught them to be a little more like him, a free spirit.

I am a huge fan of nature and I admire Chris McCandless as a brave man, but I know I can't imitate him, I have not the faculty of leaving it all and just go away, leaving my family and my life and being alone, into the wild.

I know I can't go away with only my wisdom, that's my limit. Chris McCandless understood his limit too, in the end, he understood nature is evil too; she gives and she takes. The sublime we only find in nature is for his own nature, will; and wild doesn't

consider the man part of him. I admire Alex Super tramp and I will never forget him. Thank you for letting the world know Chris McCandless.

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Into the Wild, Chapter 8 Alaska

The most strident criticism came in the form of a dense, mul-tipage epistle from Ambler, a tiny Inupiat village on the Kobuk River north of the Arctic Circle. The author was a white writer and schoolteacher, formerly from Washington, D.C., named Nick Jans. Warning that it was 1:00 A.M. and he was well into a bottle of Seagram's, Jans let fly:

Over the past 15 years, I've run into several McCandless types out in the country. Same story: idealistic, energetic young guys who overestimated themselves, underestimated the country, and ended up in trouble. McCandless was hardly unique; there's quite a few of these guys hanging around the state, so much alike that they're almost a collective cliché. The only difference is that McCandless ended up dead, with the story of his dumbassness splashed across the media. . . . (Jack London got it right in "To Build a Fire." McCandless is, finally, just a pale 20th-century burlesque of London's protagonist, who freezes because he ignores advice and commits big-time hubris).

His ignorance, which could have been cured by a USGS quadrant and a Boy Scout manual, is what killed him. And while I feel for his parents, I have no sympathy for him. Such willful ignorance . . . amounts to disrespect for the land, and paradoxically demonstrates the same sort of arrogance that resulted in the Exxon Valdez spill—just another case of underprepared, over-confident men bumbling around out there and screwing up be-cause they lacked the requisite humility. It's all a matter of degree.

McCandless's contrived asceticism and a pseudoliterary stance compound rather than reduce the fault. . . . McCandless's post-cards, notes, and journals . . . read like the work of an above average, somewhat histrionic high school kid—or am I missing something?